

ERP Session - 1 hour 15 min

Design Principle: Learning will seek the answers to the questions, challenges, and meaning of everyday life.

“Just as Franz Rosenzweig once argued that Jewish learning should begin from life and lead to Torah – not from Torah to life, we recognize that today’s learners need guides to help them uncover the answers to their everyday experiences” (Design Principles for the 21st Century). Congregations that choose this design principle will first think through the core questions and challenges that the learners face and then deliver powerful learning that helps learners seek the answers. **(Educational Resource Provider: Hazon)**

Intro/Character Brainstorm: (5 min)

Today, we are going to step inside the bible. We’ve been studying the Exodus story for the past few weeks.

I want to do a quick review of who the characters are in this story.

Character Brainstorm:

- Human (friends, family, etc.)
- non-human (who’s instrumental in the story)

(Transition)

We’ll put that aside – we’re going to do a physical activity that will require you to walk around the room. If you are not able to, you may do this activity sitting, but still doing all of the things asked of you.

The other thing we need to do is do this activity on our own – so when I ask you to walk, I invite you to be in your own experience. Don’t ignore the people around you, but it’s important that this activity is for you.

INTRO WALK: (4 min)

Walk.

Walk in the space of the room.

Walk at a normal pace, with a normal gait, with no particular focus.

Soft focus – a neutral focus, not fixed on one point but straight ahead open to your periphery, taking in everything around you

Hands at your sides

Feel free to make eye contact with others or not, but please do not verbalize.

Use all of the spaces in the room. Explore each nook and area of floorspace.

As a group, cover the space

Begin walking at your average personal pace (ie: 3 out of 5), you may already be there.

Consider the pace you are walking at a 3 out of 5. At the clap of my hands, walk at a pace of a 4.

Scale of 1-5

At the clap of my hands, 1.

Clap: 5

Clap: 3

Continue walking using all of the space in the room.

At the clap of my hands “let that go” simply walk in the space of the room.

How do you feel walking in the space? Just answer for yourself (not verbally). Scan your body and take note of what feels good, what hurts – can you still feel your lunch digesting? What about your lower back? The arches of your feet? Your head? Are you breathing clearly through your nose, are you congested?

Be conscious of what the floor feels like beneath your feet. (or in question form: “what does the floor feel like...”

Is it hard, soft, warm, cold, sticky...

Continue walking.

I’d like you to imagine that now you’re in the desert. The floor beneath your feet is sand.

Soft, dry, warm sand. How does this change the way you walk? (Adjust your walk accordingly.)

Deserts can be different kinds of terrain – what kind of desert are you in?

Be conscious of the air around you. Is it thick, dry, humid, breezy...

What does it smell like?

What is the temperature outside? Perhaps it is cold, how does that affect your walk? What time of day is it?

Perhaps the sun is shining, burning the top of your head? Make a choice. How do you walk now?

Decide who you are as you walk in this space. What is your gender? How old are you? What is the state of your health? Where are you going? Where are you coming from? Are you carrying anything? Is there anyone else with you? Is anything preventing you from reaching your goal?

Continue walking.

BIBLICAL CHARACTER SELF-WORK: (5 min)

Now I want you to choose to be someone specific from biblical times, specifically from the characters we brainstormed from the Exodus story, or ones we haven’t thought of yet. This will be different from person to person. It doesn’t matter. Make a choice. Make a choice quickly – don’t belabor it. Who’s the first person that comes to your mind?

Where are you coming from? Where are you going? What is your state of mind? What is your physical state? Does it affect the way you walk? The way you carry yourself? Your facial expression? Are you carrying anything? How old are you at this moment?

What is your mission at this moment? Is there anything getting in the way of accomplishing your goal? I’d like you, when I clap, to freeze in this moment – and I’m going to ask a couple of you a few questions. Hold your pose...

MOMENT POSE/INTERVIEW

(Stop a few people and ask where they are going and where they are coming from, who they are with, etc.)

Now, you meet someone along the way. Ask them who they are, where they are going, where they are coming from.

Meet two or three more people and make conversation.

TALK TO EACH OTHER

DEROLE: (1 min)

Now, it's time to get back into your own journey, knowing all of this amazing information that you just learned from people along the way. So start to walk...

At the clap of my hands, you will break free from this character and continue walking in the space.

Gradually walk from a 5 to a 1 and when you are ready take a seat without speaking.

FREEWRITES: (10 min)

(Hand out a piece of paper and pencil to all).

I am going to give you a sentence starter. Your job is to free-write.

Meaning, don't lift the pen from the page (even if all you're writing is blah, blah, blah).

Use your imagination and create as many details as you can, either true or make them up.

On the top of the page, write: "When I look in the mirror I see..."

(Free write for 2 minutes)

Write: "I am most happy when..."

(Free write for 2 minutes)

Write: "My favorite possession is..."

Write: "I am most afraid of..."

Write: "What I want right now is..."

(free write for 1 minute)

Write: "What I want this year is..."

(free write for 2 minutes)

Write: "What I want in my life is..." or "My life's mission..."

(free write for 4 minutes)

Go back to your freewrites. Pick one (at most two) sentences you would like to share from your free writes. The sentence you choose should really tell us the "essence" of your character.

Highlight, circle or underline that sentence.

Character Interviews (15 min)

Instructions:

The following is an example of a series of *seemingly* random, associative, meandering questions that you should answer *intuitively*. The goal of this exercise is not to answer logically or through reason, but to begin to tap into you're the life and mind of your character. Perhaps you will discover something about your character through this *intuitive* process.

Find a partner and have the partner scribe for you the answers you give to the questions. Each person gets 4 minutes to ask/answer.

You are encouraged to add questions of your own! You also can tailor questions to the particular character you are interviewing.

(Exercise adapted from a character exercise called "Quiz Club" developed by Danny Maseng for the Foundation for Jewish Camp Spielberg Fellowship in 2005)

| Questions to ask your character | Answers |
|---|---------|
| How old are you? Where did you grow up? What was your childhood like? What worries you the most? What's your favorite smell? Why? What's your favorite food? Are you married? Do you have children? Have you ever been seriously ill? Have you ever remembered your dreams? Who is the person that you're closest with? What is one regret you have? What are you most afraid of? Who is the person you're closest with? What are you most afraid of? What makes you laugh? What makes you angry? Where do you come from? What makes you jealous? What do you dream of? What do you smell like? What makes you happy? What is one great challenge in your life? What's your greatest joy? What do you work really hard at? | |

DEBRIEF CIRCLE GUIDE (20 min)

You will self-facilitate this debrief. For each section, please have a volunteer step up to facilitate. Please insure that each person has been invited to share/speak at least once.

First volunteer please read the following:

Do not tell anyone who your character was.

Pull out your freewrites. Review the one sentence you highlighted, underlined or circled that really was the essence of your character. After you share your sentence/s, have the group guess who you were and the moment in your life you wrote this. (You may need to re-read your sentence after the group guesses!)

Next volunteer please call on people, but first read them the following:

What was it like to transform the space? What made it easier, more difficult?

How did you feel about the character you chose to be?

What did you learn that surprised you about your character?

What was easy, more difficult?

What were your conversations like with others?

Now that you've learned about your character, are there any similarities or points of connection you have with this character?

Last volunteer please read the following two questions and have participants respond to whichever question calls to them.

Is there anything new you learned about the story of the Exodus or are there any questions you now have about the story of the Exodus?

To Be Continued....

The next step in this lesson would be to go back and work on a translation of a piece of text in the Exodus story we have been investigating – knowing all of this new information about this character.



Facilitator: Naomi Less, Director of Education and Training, naomi@storahtelling.org

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Facilitation Guide for Exercises:

Freewriting:

Freewriting enables you to move beyond logic and reasoning, like interviews, to discover things about your character that you may not have known. It also may end up, through this process, generating material that may be “script-worthy” – but don’t be attached to that! The main purpose is to get to know your character in an even deeper way. You’ll need paper and a pen, or if you want, you can do this on a computer, but DON’T EDIT...just type. No delete, no backspacing, just type!

Follow these instructions below:

FREEWRITE

5 minutes.

Don’t lift the pen from the page (even if all you’re writing is blah, blah, blah).

Use your imagination and create as many details as you can, either true or make them up.

On the top of the page, write: “When I look in the mirror I see...”(Free write for 2 minutes)

Write: “I am most happy when...”(Free write for 2 minutes)

Write: “My favorite possession is...”

Write: “I am most afraid of...”

Write: “What I want right now is...”(free write for 1 minute)

Write: “What I want this year is...”(free write for 2 minutes)

Write: “What I want in my life is...” or “My life’s mission...” (free write for 4 minutes)

Character Interviews:

Instructions:

The following is an example of a series of *seemingly* random, associative, meandering questions that you should answer *intuitively*. The goal of this exercise is not to answer logically or through reason, but to begin to tap into you’re the life and mind of your character. Perhaps you will discover something about your character through this *intuitive* process. You are encouraged to add questions of your own! You also can tailor questions to the particular character you are interviewing.

Find a partner and have the partner scribe for you the answers you give to the questions.

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Character Interview questions

| Questions to ask your character | Answers |
|---|---------|
| How old are you? | |
| Where did you grow up? | |
| What was your childhood like? | |
| What worries you the most? | |
| What's your favorite smell? Why? | |
| What's your favorite food? | |
| Are you married? Do you have children? | |
| Have you ever been seriously ill? | |
| Have you ever remembered your dreams? | |
| Who is the person that you're closest with? | |
| What is one regret you have? | |
| What are you most afraid of? | |
| Who is the person you're closest with? | |
| What are you most afraid of? | |
| What makes you laugh? | |
| What makes you angry? | |
| Where do you come from? | |
| What makes you jealous? | |
| What do you dream of? | |
| What do you smell like? | |
| What makes you happy? | |
| What is one great challenge in your life? | |
| What's your greatest joy? | |
| What do you work really hard at? | |